

2003P08203US

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 7, 11 and 16-19 stand rejected as being unpatentable over various references. Claim 9 stands objected to but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 20 has been allowed. Reconsideration of the rejections and objections is solicited in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 4-6, 8, 10, 12-15 and 21-25 previously withdrawn from consideration have been cancelled. New claims 26 and 27 have been added.

Claims 1 and 19 have been amended consistent with the structural and/or operational relationships already determined by the Examiner to comprise patentable subject matter over the art of record and, therefore, these independent claims, as well as any dependent claims depending from such independent claims, are now in form ready for allowance.

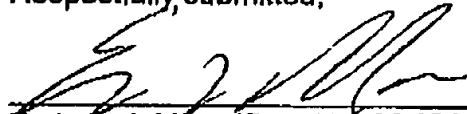
New claims 26 and 27 have been added to capture scope of protection that applicant respectfully asserts is appropriately entitled to since the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the structural and/or operational relationships recited in claims 26 and 27 regarding the characteristics of the first and second joined objects. Accordingly, these new claims are also in form ready for allowance.

It is respectfully submitted that each of the claims pending in this application recites patentable subject matter and it is further submitted that such claims comply with all statutory requirements and thus each of such claims should be allowed.

The applicant appreciates the Examiner's efforts for conducting a thorough examination, and cordially invites the Examiner to call the undersigned attorney if there are any outstanding items that may be resolved via telephone conference.

DATED this 2nd day of December, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,



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